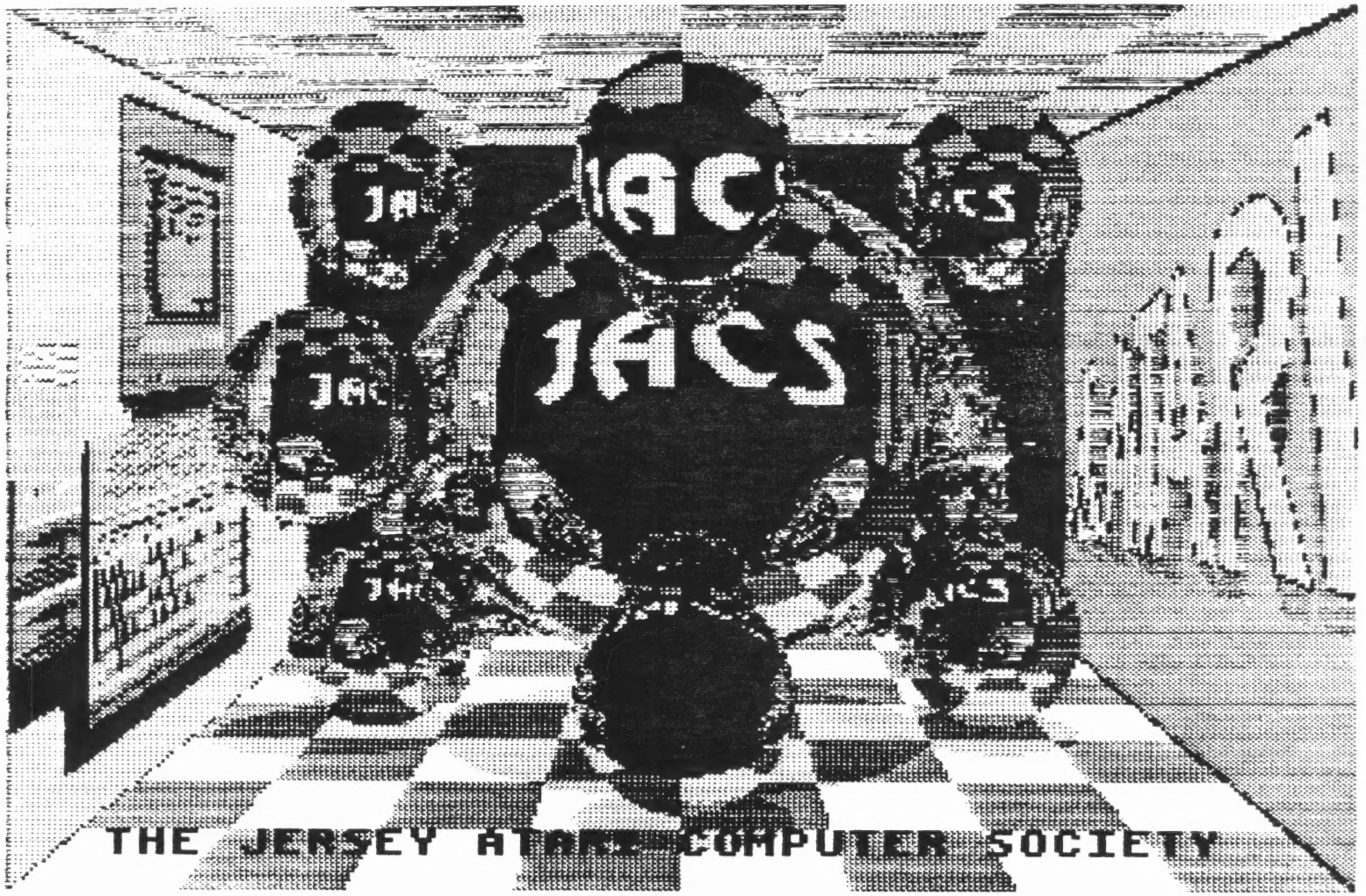
THE JERSEY ATARI COMPUTER SOCIETY'S

ST POTPOURRI

Volume 2, Number 4 July/August '87



First Laser-Printed Edition

A word from the editor

This issue I begin my editorship. As I started this issue, I got a new laser printer. I hope you like the new look. If certain obstacles can be overcome, the rest of the newsletter may be printed like this.

JACS seems to be moving ahead. I would have to say that Forrest Blood, the president for the last year, has really set things in motion. It's a shame he wasn't able to maintain presidency when his work came to fruition.

"What is happening?" you ask. We may finally get rid of the old Haddonfield meeting hall. Not only is that place out in the middle of nowhere (very hard to find), it has numerous problems--see Bob Whipple's article for more information on that.

The other major advancement, as you can see, is a better-looking newsletter. As far as I know, JACS is one of the first to use a laser printer in their newsletter. If this goes through, it could be just what we need to gain more members, since the state of Atari's computers (8-bit interest slowly waning, and STs not quite firmly planted yet) has lowered our membership.

In case you're interested, this newsletter was printed with a Beltron XT clone, HP LaserJet Series II, and WordPerfect 4.2. When WordPerfect is released on the ST, you can be sure the Potpourri will return to the unpolluted Atari.

If you happen to find an article you wrote for the ST Potpourri buried in your couch, rotting in your car, or covering the turkey in your oven, please send it right along to me. Of course, if it's undamaged, I'll take it too.

Let me remind you once more that JACS, along with its newsletter, is supported entirely by *YOU*. Without your effort, we would be gone by now. Those of you that have been contributing all along, thanks.

About the cover

This month's cover is a screen dump of JACS' ray-trace demo. This was originally done by Forrest Blood, and was dumped on an Epson-compatible printer. Why didn't I use the laser? Because I don't have a printer driver. Laser printers use different codes than dot-matrix printers do, so I can't use the laser printer for graphics. If anyone can find it (I scoured GEnie), I would greatly appreciate a DEGAS screen dump driver for a LaserJet. Thanks.

If you would like to see the real ray-trace demo (it's animated, and those spheres move around), you can get it on Blitburg. Great job, Forrest.

This issue is an experiment. Future ST Potpourri's may not look exactly like this one. If you have any comments on it, let me know at the JACS meeting, on Blitburg (346-0611 data), or you could always mail me a letter:

Brian Colflesh
17 Spring Hill Drive
Laurel Springs, NJ 08021

Form letter

You all know the type. "Articles received but not printed may be printed in a future newsletter." "All rights reserved." And, don't forget, " 'We' reserve the right to edit and correct articles." Don't like it? Tell someone, but in the meantime, write an article anyway!

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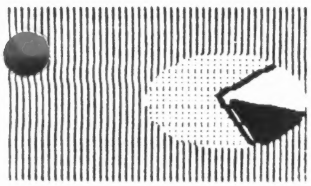
Write an article!

The deadline for the next ST Potpourri is

September 21



ST BITS & PIECES
Irv Feinberg

What? An 8-bit emulator?

Atari said it was "almost impossible." Darek Mihocka of London, Ontario set out to prove them wrong. It is primitive, it won't support graphics, you can get a beautiful *READY* prompt and simple 8-bit BASIC programs can be typed in and run. This emulator is available on many boards.

Why not a full fledged program with marketing punch behind it? Blame it on Atari. In their infinite wisdom (remember Atari of old) the thought of an 8-bit emulator really bent them out of shape. They considered the program piracy. Their reasoning was that a portion of the Translator disk was used. The Translator disk was not released as public domain.

The ST Transformer, which is the current program name, appears to execute 6502 code at about 20% of the speed, It supports graphics modes 0, 1, 2, 3, 6, 6+, 7, 7+ and 8--most display lists, color registers, most read and write DOS operations, 1 joystick port and printer output.

It does not support GTIA modes, player missile graphics or sound registers. When the entire operating system is coded to 68000 code the result will be a significant increase in speed.

According to Atari, it is illegal for Darek to distribute the emulator because he included the Translator disk's image of the Revision B ROM's. Atari has introduced the CP/M emulator, so *why don't they want former 8-bit owners to be able to use their 8-bit software?* I believe that Atari has an obligation to those owners who supported Atari through thick and thin. If they are the only people who can make a legal emulator then they should do it. You know it can be done! The code of their CP/M emulator is quite similar to the code of the 8-bit Transformer. For updated information try Megabaud at (416) 243-9519 or CompuServe (UID 73657, 2714). As of this writing, rumor has it that Antic will be publishing the Transformer.

New Software

Progressive Peripherals and Software Inc. of Denver has written SuperBase Personal. The software uses GEM to provide standard database functions. It will also offer the ability to handle graphics and visual data formats. It will retail for $149.95

This fall Atari will begin to sell UNIX-based software including an operating system and applications packages. A port of Idris, a UNIX based operating system developed by Whitesmiths Ltd. is already completed for the 520ST and 1040ST. Atari should be selling Idris in September or October. Atari is also developing a 68020 based PC called the Mega ES which has a memory management unit and will support UNIX V.

ST MEETING MINUTES
By Bob Whipple

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm on July 21st 1987.

Our first demo of the night was K-Switch, by Jim Cummings. As you remember Jim was scheduled for the June ST meeting, but was called out of town at the last minute. Jim explained that K-Switch uses 2 400K "computers," while simultaneously adding a shared ram disk, on 1 megabyte machines.

He then proceeded to load up ST Writer in one block and Thunder! in the other. By pressing both shift keys and the alternate key at the same time he was able to "flip" from ST Writer to Thunder! without quitting the current program.

Jim mentioned that sometimes his daughter loads up 2 games and flips from one to the other.

K-Switch was only available as an import from England, but now can be had from ANTIC.

Thanks, Jim, for a very informative demo.

Continued

ST MEETING MINUTES continued

Next, I gave everyone a quick peek at the ST Transformer--the 8-bit emulator for the ST. I also answered some questions on it. See reviews and the JACS Meeting Minutes in this issue for more info concerning this miracle.

We had a short break and continued with more emulation, this time in the form of an IBM emulator for the ST, pc-DITTO.

Brian Colflesh, our new ST Potpourri editor demonstrated this remarkable product for the ST. He gave a brief demo of Lotus 1-2-3, dBASE III Plus, and WordPerfect. Brian ported over these IBM programs using his Dad's PC, but some IBM software is available in 3.5" format and some software is packaged with both 3.5" and 5.25" disks. He also mentioned a list of about 250 titles (the list is included with the pc-DITTO program) that run without a hitch. Bob Paradis then popped in a PD chess game he recently picked up at a computer show and it also ran. Great demo Brian!! Thanks, Bob.

Since the night was filled with ST magic, it goes without saying that the next presentation even got my complete attention. Remember Jeff Diamond, the kid who wrote that Atari BASIC "JACSPOT" program we used to use at meetings to pull the 50/50 number? Remember those graphics?? Well, that kid is now a young man about to start his first year in college. Jeff still writes in Basic, this time it is ST BASIC.

Jeff wrote a program which he calls "3-D Frame Drawing CAD." This program allows you to create, move, rotate, animation, and allows input sequence strings from the user, all in ST BASIC.

Everyone knows how slow ST BASIC is, but Jeff seemed to overcome this completely. He show us a space craft he had designed and proceeded to rotate it, in 3-D, all over the screen. Jeff has agreed to donate this super program to the JACS ST LIBRARY. Super, SUPER demo, Jeff. Thanks a million.
(During the break Danny Boris introduced Jeff to GFA BASIC for the ST. Needless to say, Jeff was amazed. I hope Jeff gets around to buying GFA BASIC real soon, then I'm sure his ST's keyboard will be smokin', and we'll be seeing many more GREAT things written in Basic for the ST.)

The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

I want to thank ALL of the members that have attended the last 2 "ST only" meetings, for without your help it wouldn't have been possible.

To All JACS Members

The ST meetings have taken place for the last 2 months at the Camden County Library (CCL) without any hassles. I wish I could say that about the last few JACS meetings at the Haddonfield Arts & Crafts League (HACL) building.

The HACL has given us a hassle since I was president back in '85. The place is almost never air-conditioned/heated, only when HACL has a art class or another function right before us do we find the hall cooled/heated. The building seems to be in constant repair. Leaking roof, busted floor tiles, etc. Limited parking is also a problem. We have been after some sort of contract from them for months now, for our own protection, but this still hasn't happened. They've raised our rent--they quoted us $50 on the phone then charged us $55. The bottom line is they want us out. Reason: We are not art, we are computers.

I have worked very close with the folks at CCL to pull off these ST meetings. They are all very helpful to accommodate our special needs, especially, Helen Elliot with whom I have spoken to several times about the selling of our PD disks at the meetings. An agreement has been reached and we will be able to sell our disks using our own JACS coinage. (U.S. currency can *not* be exchanged on county property by groups renting rooms.)

On day of the last ST meeting the temperature was 95 degrees. In our room it was 73. We didn't have to set up or take down chairs or move around objects of art. We all had a place close by to park. Our meetings have all been *very* enjoyable. All of this for just $5 a meeting.

So what I'm saying is, *we gotta move!* Voice your opinion at the next JACS meeting at HACL, and we may be able to have our September meeting at CCL in comfort.

Bob Whipple
ST Coordinator

ST POTPOURRI POTPOURRI
by Bob Whipple and Brian Colflesh

Microprose in trouble

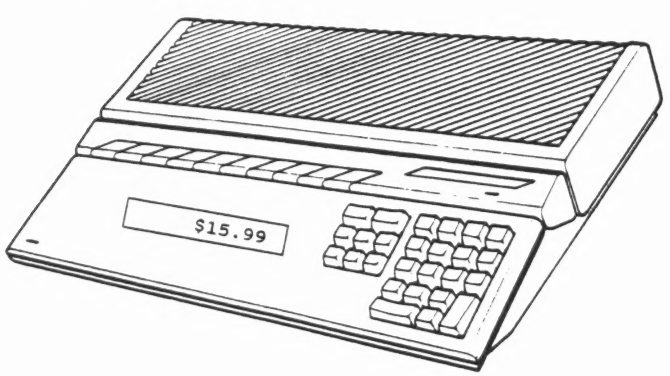
Microprose has two problems. First, West Germany has banned their three top programs. The law used by the government is intended to protect children from violence and pornography (in this case, violence); the final decision apparently will hinge on whether the law is interpreted as pertaining only to "passive media" and these programs are interactive. Otherwise, Microprose will suffer a big loss in the international sales dept.

The second problem is that MicroPro has forced them to change their name, since the alternative is a nice, long, expensive court battle. They still face serious marketing difficulties.

Shades of Commodore

The new ATARI was the old Commodore folks!! Commodore started as a maker of calculators. Late this summer expect to see a full line ATARI brand calculators in your favorite department stores. Will wonders ever cease??

(Secret spy photo follows...)



Hartech Ltd. will manufacture the calculators. There will be four models: a solar LCD credit-card size, a printing calculator, a desktop model, and another one that stores 4,000 characters of information for phone numbers, addresses, or other stuff like that. (Please note that the price in the "calculator" 's window doesn't mean anything...)

New ST Releases

MasterPlan
Is a GEM based financial spreadsheet that allows importing files from VIP & LOTUS 1-2-3. Spreadsheet size is 8192 x 256. Graphs can be created and the files are DEGAS & Publishing Partner compatible. ISD Mrktng $149.95

ST Wars
3D graphics and digitized sound space battle. 10 deadly sequences. Miles Computing $39.95

GFA Vector
3-D graphic editor allows creation, viewing insertion into GFA basic programs. GFA BASIC req. MichTron Inc. $49.95

MaxPak
Utility package including high-speed print spooler, RAMdisk, printer enhancer, screen saver, key macros, digital clock, and a file lister and expression calculator. SoftWerx Publishing $49.95

ATARI MAGIC SHOW (a computer show)

Sponsored by MichTron
Aug 28-29-30 1987
Southfield Hilton
Southfield Michigan.
Speakers include Sig Hartmann, David Small, Gordon Monnier, Timothy Purves. Vendors galore!!
Expected at the show are the Mega-ST, SX1200 modem, Atari's Laser printer and the APC (Atari PC). If you plan to be in the Michigan area on those dates and want to attend call Jerry Cross at (313) 736-4544 for more info.

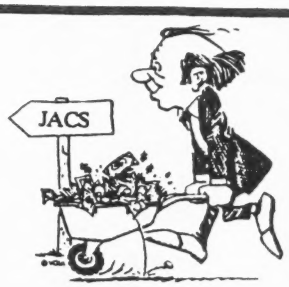
Other Atari news

Neil Harris, Atari's marketing communications director, said that the ST version of WordPerfect (which should be released very soon now) runs five times as fast as the IBM version.

It seems that Atari's priority at the CES was to put the 65XE's game model against Nintendo's and Sega's super game systems, and that's why the Megas and laser printer weren't there.

Continued

Atari Games has signed an exclusive agreement to sell personal computer versions of Atari's arcade games. First come Paperboy and Gauntlet ($34.95 each), due next month. Coming up later are Rolling Thunder, 720, Road Runner, Road Blasters, and Gauntlet II. They'll be released for "most home computer formats."



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ANSIGRAF 8
HEX 9
ROGUE 5
STTERM 4
ARENA 7
HIPPOWORD 2
SDI 9
SUNDOG 1
COLOURSPACE 1
JOUST 7
SHANGHAI 6
SUPERCYCLE 10
HACKER 1
PRINTMASTER 9
STPOOL 3
DEEPSPACE 1
MUSICSTUDIO 2
SKYFOX 10
WINTERGAMES 4
ARENA 7
DEGASELITE 10
HIPPOWORD 2
PCOMMAND 7
SDI 9
STARRAIDERS 8
SUNDOG 1
ZOOMRACKS 5
COLOURSPACE 1
GOLDENPATH 10
JOUST 7
PHANTASIE 5
SHANGHAI 6
STKEY 6
SUPERCYCLE 10
DBMAN 5
HACKER 1
LEADERBOARD 10
PRINTMASTER 9
SILENTSERVICE 3
STPOOL 3
TEXTPRO 10

The first letter of the word in the puzzle is highlighted and in the column number at right of the word in the list.

This month I start off a new feature: *Most Valuable Member*. This is one of the ways JACS can thank members for doing something special or doing their job well.

MOST VALUABLE MEMBER

Curt Fickenscher

Curt has been running JACS' BBS for a while now, and running it well. Those of you that have been keeping up with the BBS know that back when it was running AMIS and FoReM it tended to crash a lot. No more of that. Now the system has a 192K RAMdisk and three double-density drives for BBS Express! to use. No more does it crash from software error, user mess-up, or anything like that. He's also fixed the group's 1040ST several times when it was "feeling under the weather." Great job, Curt. Thanks very much.

THERE WILL NOT BE AN "ST-ONLY" MEETING THIS MONTH!

If you enjoyed the last two meetings, and would like to see more, let the officers know at the August meeting!

Just don't sit there,

speak up!

Members Note: Please patronize our advertisers & mention JACS while you are there.

JACS

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